

AROUND THE CORPS IN BRIEF

Leaders reassure Iraqis of authority transfer

CAMP AL ASAD, Iraq – Local leaders in Al Anbar Province's western region gathered June 10 to discuss the June 30 turnover of Iraq's sovereignty with the commanding officers of the battalions under Regimental Combat Team 7.

The day-long meeting primarily focused on security concerns once the Iraqis take control of their own government.

"After July 1, security will be the responsibility of Iraq's government," said Col. Craig A. Tucker, commanding officer of RCT-7. "Our purpose will be in assisting security forces."

The meeting began with the local leaders expressing their concerns over what would take place. Questions ranged from what factor will the Iraqi and Marine security forces play to improving quality of life for Iraqis with better facilities and other basic needs.

"The next few weeks will have many changes," Tucker said. "The meeting today is to insure we all leave here with a common goal."

Once the turnover of power is complete, the Marines of RCT-7 will play a much smaller role in local affairs, assisting only when necessary. Primary responsibility for security will soon fall to Iraqi police and Iraqi Civil Defense Corps soldiers.

BLT 1/6 looks for weapons, insurgents

FORWARD OPERATING BASE PAYNE, Afghanistan — Tucked away in the steep valleys of a mountainous region in the south-central Afghanistan province of Oruzgan lay hundreds of small compounds and buildings. In each of these is the potential for Taliban and other anti-coalition militia to stash weapons and ammunition to carry out attacks against U.S., Afghan National Army, or other coalition forces.

"The Taliban won't necessarily stay in the villages themselves," explained Maj. Brian Christmas, operations officer for Battalion Landing Team 1st Bn., 6th Marines, ground combat element of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable). "Instead, what they'll do is hide the weapons and then pick them up before an attack. After the attack, they'll hide them again and blend in with the villagers."

To deny the enemy these hiding places, BLT 1/6, in conjunction with the other elements of the 22d MEU (SOC), recently launched an aggressive "cordon and knock" operation with the sole purpose of digging out these caches. The battalion's Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, and Weapons companies spread out through the region and descended upon these potential hiding places.

"In a cordon and search we employ the whole company and attachments," said Capt. Ronald Gouker, Alpha Company commander. "We move in and basically surround the village or area with our rifle platoons. Once the perimeter is established we move in with our searchers from one side of the cordon area to the other, searching everything we come across."

These outlaying, or "cordon," forces are primarily looking to nab anyone who flees a village upon seeing the search teams approach. They also provide security and stand ready to enter a

Air Wing and a leg ...



Lance Cpl. Giovanni Lobello

MCAS IWAKUNI, Japan – Staff Sgt. Eric Mason, Marine Aircraft Group 12 operations chief, practices knee strikes during Marine Aircraft Group 12's biannual hike around the Station June 4. The hike was a way of giving a last farewell to the MAG-12 Headquarters commanding officer and congratulate the Marines who continue to give loyal service to the United States Marine Corps.

village should additional search personnel or combat forces be needed.

In recent weeks, Marines from throughout BLT 1/6 have uncovered 10 machineguns, 85 rifles, several pistols, tens of thousands of rounds of small arms and large-caliber munitions, rockets and mortar rounds of various sizes, nearly 200 explosive devices, and at least 32 rocket-propelled grenade launchers and 250 RPG rounds.

Snipers learn new way to shoot – with cameras

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii — Aside from one well-aimed shot ripping through the quiet air, Scout Sniper Platoon, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), learned a way to shoot without ever touching a rifle.

Using Canon 10D digital cameras, the 20 Marines of Scout Sniper Platoon learned to shoot photos during sustainment training here, June 3-5, on their way to Iraq to conduct security and stability operations.

The Marine Air Ground Task Force Secondary Imagery Dissemination System (MSIDS) is a new way for reconnaissance units to take pictures of a

location and send them back to decision makers via radio.

"It's going to change the whole way snipers operate," said 1st Lt. James H. Madrinan, Scout Sniper Platoon commander. "Before, field sketches were used."

Field sketches are detailed side views or overhead matrices on graph paper where the artist has to convey the drawing square by square over the radio, or wait until he returns to show what was observed. The entire process would typically take two to four hours.

"Now with this capability, we can take a picture, label the azimuth and direction and send it," Madrinan said.

Reconnaissance battalions and Force Reconnaissance companies already rate the system in their issued gear, and now as a result of Operation Iraqi Freedom, every sniper team will have one also.

The information can be transported as quickly as the Marine can take a picture, label it and send it back on one of the many radios the Marine Corps uses.

Marines help Haitian Athletic Association

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Marines and sailors from India Company, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine

Regiment, took time away from their day-to-day duties to deliver some soccer equipment to a local sports complex and challenge one of the local soccer teams to a friendly match.

The Marines delivered a variety of cleats, balls and jerseys donated by the United States Soccer Foundation before engaging in some friendly competition with a team from the Haitian Athletic Association.

"This was a good opportunity for us to get a break from operations, get a workout and help the community all at the same time," said Capt. Jason Arthaud, India Company commander.

The sports complex was started seven years ago as a way to bring the community together.

"I started this as more of a social program," said Robert Duval, the association's president, "Soccer was just an excuse to bring people together."

But the complex does more than bring people together. Duval has been able to give an opportunity to kids with very little future.

"Ninety percent of these kids do not have parents, through this complex I've been able to feed them and even provide a temporary home for a few when I can."

Pendleton CG unveils latest Carrillo piece

MCRD SAN DIEGO, Calif. — On a significant day in Marine Corps history at his quarters, the Depot commanding general recognized preservationists and unveiled a new addition to the Depot's historical legacy.

Depot Marines and civilians gathered at Quarters One June 2 to celebrate what would have been Maj. Gen. Joseph H. Pendleton's 144th birthday.

Depot Commanding General Brig. Gen. John M. Paxton Jr. acknowledged the men and women of the museum at James L. Day Hall and the Command Museum Historical Society for their work in preserving Marine Corps history.

Parker H. Jackson of the society's board of directors suggested the idea to recognize Maj. Gen. Pendleton's birthday. Maj. Gen. Pendleton was a colonel when he petitioned to establish a Marine presence in San Diego before 1919.

When Debbie Paxton, the commanding general's wife, heard this suggestion, she decided it would also be the prime time to show off a painting that one of the Corps' best artists had created. "I had seen his art and heard about him," she said. "When I found out Sergeant [Jack] Carrillo was here, I thought it would be a good opportunity to have him make something lasting while he is still at MCRD."

Carrillo, from the combat visual information center here, is one of the most talented and well-known working artists in the Corps. He sketched six preliminary works of Quarters One before working on the final painting, and he added its finishing touches up to the morning of the unveiling.

EOD personnel put to test during training

CENTRAL TRAINING AREA, OKINAWA, Japan — Five Marines with Explosive Ordnance Disposal, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 3rd Force Service Support Group, each with less

than a year of explosives training, took to the range to test their newly developed skills here May 27.

"In school they are taught certain things using TNT, dynamite and C4, but they don't get a lot of practical application," said Master Sgt. Michael T. Dailey, EOD staff non-commissioned officer in charge. "What we're doing is teaching them how to utilize their demolition procedures and skills to use explosive devices against other items."

That translates, in part, to blowing stuff up.

Tasked with disposing of small arms ammunition, an 81 mm mortar round, one 155 mm high explosive artillery round, rocket motors and a 37 mm anti-aircraft round, the EOD technicians used nonelectric, electric, remote electric and expedient small arms burning techniques to safely dispose of the hazardous materials.

The Marines spend each working day here learning on the job as a continuation of skills learned during their seven-month school at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida.

"Our job is like being an archeologist because you have to dig around to figure out what's there. Every day we do something different, and not knowing what we have to deal with is one of the most exciting things about my job," Sgt. Cody L. Anderson, explosive ordnance disposal technician.

More than 50 years after World War II, the EOD Marines occasionally assist the Japanese Ground Self Defense Force dispose of unexploded ordnance unearthed from the war.

MAG-12 Marines hike 7 miles around station

MCAS IWAKUNI, Japan – Personnel from Marine Aircraft Group 12 went on their biannual hike around the Station June 4.

This time they had more in mind than training and physical conditioning. The hike was a way of giving a last farewell to the MAG-12 Headquarters commanding officer and congratulate the Marines who continue to give loyal service to the United States Marine Corps.

"We came out here today to get out and do some physical training, [Marine Corps Marine Arts Program sustainment] and to honor Maj. Robert W. Reynolds and Gunnery Sgt. Michael L. Daley for reenlisting," said Gunnery Sgt. James W. Biggs, MAG-12 first sergeant.

The Marines, with packs full of gear, stepped out from the North Side football field and commenced with their 7-mile journey along the perimeter of the station. After a brief stop for gear adjustment, the hump continued as the unsuspecting Marines got a surprise.


The sirens sounded, indicating a drill emulating a gas attack. The Marines quickly donned and cleared their masks and screamed "Gas! Gas! Gas!"

Once at the sand pit in front of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal site, MCMAP instructors took charge for the next hour.

"We performed the tan belt moves as part of the Marines MCMAP sustainment training," said Biggs.

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Preparing for war ...



Lance Cpl. Sarah A. Beavers

ABOARD THE USS KEARSARGE – Marines of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (SOC) arrive in the well deck of the USS Kearsarge via Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC), June 10 as the MEU begins its flow of troops to Iraq. The rest of the unit will meet these Marines and their equipment in Iraq in July.